

**Fall 2006/Winter 2007**A large, stylized 3D number '12' is the central focus. The '1' is white with a black outline and a 3D effect. The '2' is also white with a black outline and a 3D effect. A thick, red swoosh or underline runs behind the '2' and under the '1'. The background is a light gray with a repeating pattern of the text 'International Leadership' and 'Intergenerational' in a smaller, lighter font.

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## **CONTINUANCE MAGAZINE**

Fall 2006/Winter 2007

Vol. 21: Nos. 1 & 2

### *Knowledge and Understanding Passing from Generation to Generation*

Continuance is produced by the Center for Intergenerational Leadership, a coalition of educators, retirees, and intergenerational organizations with the following goals:

- to foster communication and contact between generations and cultures
- to enrich the educational experience through lifelong service and learning
- to encourage creative thinking and approaches to solve the challenges of education
- to publicize the stories about younger and older generations

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# Continuance

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Fall 2006/Winter 2007

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Four Pillars of Learning

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# Commentary

## History and the good old 1-2-3

Early in the civil rights movement, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. envisioned a future in America that guaranteed equality for all. He looked to history and found guidelines for organizing and sustaining the movement, and he took action. This scenario happened over and over again during the civil rights movement; envisioning the future, building on the past, and making things happen little by little.

King's success provides a framework for making Illinois an intergenerational leadership state. First, let us envision a future when younger and older generations are pulled together and routinely advance the goals of the education system, one that has become a quality system for all. Imagine that everyone contributes; retirees to students, students to each other, students to retirees, citizen to citizen in a new spirit of civic engagement.

We have seen some impressive movement in the last few months through the Generations Connect campus meetings and an indication that intergenerational leadership is like mountain

wildflowers in the spring--sprouting everywhere.

The second example of King's leadership was to build on the past, the historical part of leadership. One might chuckle and say, retirees have an abundance of experiences and remembrances from the past. According to young people surveyed during the Generations Connect meetings, "Retirees can tell us so much about getting jobs and what to expect in the real world." Young people say they want to tap that savvy for their careers, to raise the bar in their academic lives, and become more global in their thinking.

The last example from Dr. King, and the one that kept his movement going was making things happen little by little. The 1-2-3 featured in this issue is based on getting things done, even if it is a small step at a time.

A state characterized by intergenerational leadership is a place of readiness: *age readiness*, that is, making preparations for the aging of our population; *college and career readiness*, working with



our young people so that all can have a quality education; *diversity readiness*, the ability to understand those who are different; and *civic readiness*, the notion that we can't do it alone, that all ages must work together. This is the heart of intergenerational leadership.

When we honor Dr. Martin Luther King in January, think about the next steps in his dream—one is quality education for all. Then get started with the 1-2-3. **One:** Give some time to help our young people and our educational system. **Two:** Involve your friends and relatives. **Three:** Tell the stories so that your efforts live on and multiply.

Jane Angelis, Editor



## Intergenerational Leadership

- Individual
- Campus
- State
- World

The world is comprised of many strands, symbolically representing all ages, races, and cultures. When the strands are connected, just as generations in dialogue, we create new strength to solve local and global problems. Intergenerational leadership begins with an *individual* who connects the intergenerational strands and establishes the momentum for giving time, encouraging others to join, and spreading the word by telling the stories. That is the 1-2-3 for individual involvement.

Intergenerational leadership also happens on *campuses*. The Generations Connect discussions held in September and October involved 500+ individuals and 30 campuses. Many of the original thirty are already preparing campus plans for intergenerational leadership as a permanent fixture on their campuses. The second wave of Generations Connect discussions will be held in February, March, and April and the third wave, in the fall, which will join education and communities in examining aging readiness. That is the 1-2-3 for campuses.

The Aging is an Asset meeting held on October 11, 2006, focused attention on the *state* and the ways that higher education can help retirees and how retirees can help higher education. The second part of this initiative is a focus on P-20 and retirees. Senator Ed Maloney, Senate Higher Education committee and Kimberly Lightford, Senate Education Committee will join educators and retirees in this dialogue. The third event will focus on communities and will bring together retirees, education, and communities. The key sponsor is the Illinois Department on Aging. Again, the 1-2-3 for an Intergenerational leadership state.

Last, intergenerational leadership is an important *world* connector as countries find commonalities in the aging of their populations and their commitment to education for all. Intergenerational leadership begins with the individual and has potential to reach the world.



# Higher education examines opportunities presented by an aging population

Danielle Dalo and Megan Frielich  
Continuance Interns

The aging population is growing rapidly in Illinois, the United States, and throughout the world and a common question arises, "Who will take care of the growing number of older people?" Another important question is "How can education benefit from the talents, experiences, and wisdom of the aging population?"

On October 11, a brainstorming session called Aging is an Asset, brought together higher education leaders and retirees to discuss a future where one of every 4 people will be over 60. The Center for Intergenerational Leadership, which is based at SIU Carbondale, developed the session that met at Heartland Community College in Normal. A group of presidents, vice presidents, deans, lifelong-learning coordinators, and retirees put their heads together about how higher education and older Illinoisans can benefit. Clearly there are needs that retirees could address.

Dr. Elmer Washington, the meeting chair and a member of the Illinois Board of Higher Education, emphasized the importance



Jana Edge, a Senior Scholar at Illinois State University shares ideas about quality of life issues in retirement, particularly self image.

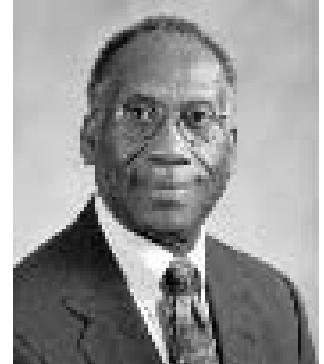
L to R: Terry Ludwig, Morraine Valley; Senator Ed Maloney; Jana Edge, and Don Naylor, State Universities Annuitants Association

of communication when bringing generations together. Communication is also needed to inform educators, retirees, and policy makers, and to obtain public support, he said. Washington challenged the group to communicate their ideas, get the message out about what we are doing—in short, to improve the information flow.

Charles Johnson, director of the Illinois Department on Aging, said that the media are beginning to ask questions about the impact of a growing retiree population. And

according to *Maturing in America*, a National Association of Area Agencies on Aging report, communities are not prepared. Johnson spoke about caregiving as a challenge, not only for frail elders, but the 200,000 grandparents who are raising grandchildren.

Senator Ed. Maloney (District 18 – Chicago) said that hearings on graduation and retention he held point to the needs in higher education. "Everyone has priorities but the aging of the population and the potential for retirees to foster



L to R: Elmer Washington, IBHE Member and meeting chair; Ed Maloney, chair, Senate Higher Education Committee; Marilyn Hennessy, president, Retirement Research Foundation; and Charles Johnson, director, Illinois Department on Aging.

education crosses all issues. Talk to your local legislator and communicate the possibilities. This is an investment in the future of Illinois."

Marilyn Hennessy, president, Retirement Research Foundation spoke about the image of aging as changing from one of deficit to one of productivity. She said the numbers are scary when looking at the future. "We will need to redefine what aging is about because the boomers are changing everything." Hennessy described the Purpose Prize that was awarded to people 60 and older for their social initiatives with the goal to change the perception and potential of retirees.

The discussion included ideas about how retirees can return to campus as tutors, mentors, guest lecturers as well as how they can be the foundation for an infrastructure of retiree involvement. In addition to the speakers, the facilitators included Tom Schmidt, president Carl Sandburg College; John Dunn, interim chancellor, SIUC; Mary

Bates, Dean of Community Education, Waubensee Community College; and Terry Ludwig, interim vice president, Moraine Valley College.

Jane Angelis, director, Center for Intergenerational Leadership summarized the meeting by showing the aging statistics from the United States and around

the world. She paired the needs and resources of education with the needs and resources of retirees. "People talk about the educational needs, and yet we have a population that can help and we aren't inviting them to get involved," she said.

The 37 participants set in motion recommendations that rely on a



Elmer Washington, IBHE, asks questions from the RespectAbility Survey. L to R: President Brent Knight, Morton College; Keri Burton, Central IL AAA; Kathleen Holden-Pecknold, UIUC, Elmer Washington, IBHE; Alan Harderson, Joliet Jr. College; Alberta Newman, Retiree, Illinois State

sleek system of communication. The system clearly defines the possibilities and potential for a close relationship between retirees and higher education.



The participants divided into four groups and discussed questions about how higher education could help retirees, how retirees could help higher education, and the best way to organize it on university and community college campuses. L to R (clockwise): Russ Marineau, HURRAH, Dist 203, Naperville; Mary Bates, Dean, Community Education, Waubensee; Tom Schmidt, president, Carl Sandburg, Bill Naegle, Board Member ICCB; Anthony Traxler, Gerontology director, SIUE; Tom Laue, Editor, LifeTimes, Blue Cross Blue Shield; Karen Hunter Anderson, ICCB



John Dunn, Interim Chancellor of Southern Illinois University Carbondale said "One of the strengths of using retired faculty as volunteers is that their presence allows for a very positive connection between and among generations." L to R (clockwise): Larry Frank, Illinois Education Association; Dunn; Susan Solberg, Dean of Arts and Sciences, Prairie State College; Chad Murphy, Workforce Development, Spoon River College; Tom Heinrich, Human Resources, College of Lake County

### **Participants** ***Aging is an Asset for*** ***Higher Education*** **October 11, 2006**

Karen Hunter Anderson, Illinois Community College Board, Jane Angelis, Center for Intergenerational Leadership, SIUC, Jonathan Astroth, Heartland Community College, Cheryl Barber, University of Illinois Urbana Champaign, Mary Bates, Waubensee Community College, Mary Beastall, University of Illinois, Nancy Burrows, Triton College, Keri Burton, Central Illinois Agency on Aging, Inc., Meredith Byers, Illinois Education Association, John Dunn, Southern Illinois University, Jana Edge, Illinois State University, Larry Frank, Illinois Education Association, Al Harderson, Joliet Jr. College, Mabel Hayes, John Logan Community College, Tom Heinrich, College of Lake County, Marilyn Hennessy, Retirement Research Foundation, Kathleen Holden-Pecknold, UIUC, Charles Johnson, Illinois Department on Aging, Judy Jozaitis, Triton College, Rowena R. Klein-Robarts, Joliet Jr. College, Brent Knight, Morton College, Thomas Laue, LifeTimes, Chicago, Terry Ludwig, Moraine Valley Community College, Senator Ed Maloney, Chicago 18<sup>th</sup> District, Don Naylor, State Universities Annuitants Association, Russ Marineau, HURRAH, District 203, Naperville, Chad Murphy, Spoon River College, Bill Naegle, IL Community College Board, Alberta Newman, Illinois State University, Michael O'Donnell, East Central IL AAA, Anita Revelle, Illinois State University, Margaret Plaskas, Waubensee Community College, Tom Schmidt, Carl Sandburg College, Susan Solberg, Prairie State College, Anthony Traxler, SIU Edwardsville, Elmer Washington, Illinois Board of Higher Education, and Jolene Wiegard, Richland Community College



# Generations create new strength for higher education

*Illinois has taken a giant step forward in the quest to engage every resource to strengthen the educational system. Thirty Generations Connect meetings sponsored by presidents and chancellors featured dialogue: retirees and students discussed their lives, their interdependence, and the future.*

Strength and energy were apparent in the 30 Generations Connect meetings, a series sponsored by university and community college presidents and chancellors in September and October. Students, retirees and faculty discussed the importance of linking generations to address problems and challenges of higher education.

The Generations Connect meetings were planned on each campus by a convener appointed by the president or chancellor. The conveners gathered others from campus and the community to prepare an agenda, invite



Students at Joliet Junior college look at their cards with words like chalk and chalkboard that helped them find their retiree partners.

students and retirees, and set the date.

During the planning, students asked, "Why would I want to spend time talking to old people? What would I say to them?" But after the events, these students were the first to ask, "Can we do this again?" The spirit of cooperation was abundant. The University of Illinois Springfield and Lincoln Land Community College partnered in developing their meeting, which had a timely dimension—caregiving. Information was provided for their employees, which was a project through the gerontology program at UIS.

Some started the meetings with ice breakers. Joliet Junior College gave each student and retiree a paper holding complimentary words, such as salt and pepper, to help them find their partner. Other campuses told stories about the past: Frontier Community College started with a story written in a cookbook. The College of DuPage featured a session on myths about age and youth. Governors State started by



Students and retirees had a chance to visit and talk about issues important in their lives. They also discussed ways that they could work together for improving education.

telling stories about people who had blessed their lives. Kankakee asked participants to compare slang words of their generation for the names of people or things.

Conveners reported that some dramatic stories were shared by participants. At John A. Logan, a student told about a suicide, and she wondered if it might have been prevented if an older person had been available to talk. A student at Triton shared a touching story about her grandmother and hoped her daughter might have the same experiences.

A retiree from McHenry Community College commented that being around students helps her stay current with the world. At Northern Illinois University, gerontology students compared attitudes about aging in the

The Generations Connect meetings were sponsored by Senate President Emil Jones Jr., the Center for Intergenerational Leadership at Southern Illinois University Carbondale, the Illinois Board of Higher Education, the Council of University Presidents, the Council of Community College Presidents, the State Universities Annuitants Association, the Illinois Department on Aging, the Illinois Community College Board, and the Illinois State Board of Education



Master Gardeners from UI Extension join Kishwaukee President David Louis in a discussion with the Horticulture 101 class.

United States and in India. At Richland Community College, retirees and students agreed that they don't know much about other generations, and said they need to spend more time around each other. Shawnee Community College participants focused on the workforce and students asked the retirees about jobs.

Several colleges found that Generations Connect discussions worked best in a course, particularly a gerontology course or in cooperation with older learners. Rend Lake College and Southwestern Illinois College

piggy-backed on lifelong learning programs. Kishwaukee Community College invited their U of I Extension Master Gardeners to a horticulture class and the wisdom flowed.

Some Generations Connect meetings featured dignitaries. At Southern Illinois University Carbondale, Illinois Senate President Emil Jones Jr. and IBHE Chairman James Kaplan attended. At Oakton, intergenerational pioneer Helene Block shared her love of intergenerational programs. Many presidents participated in the meetings, and

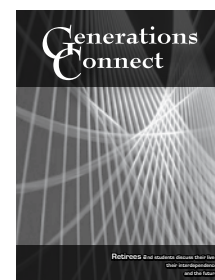
one, President Al Goldfarb, WIU, hosted the Generations Connect meeting in his home.

There were plenty of creative ideas for future meetings. Chicago State suggested a rap session to discuss barriers in language and share pop culture; Black Hawk Community College is planning a course contrasting old and current TV segments; and John Wood Community College will pair student nurses with retirees so they have a better understanding of aging. The Senior Professionals Program at Illinois State University is preparing mock interviews to help students improve their job-seeking skills.

Some of the 30 sites reported having a difficult time recruiting students. Olney Central Community College solved that problem by asking the students to invite older community members to attend. Only one university, UIUC, had multiple meetings which targeted college students and high school students. One meeting was held on campus



How we get connected is a question that Generations Connect participants discussed. The group of retirees, board members, education leaders and seniors weighed several ideas.



For copies of *Generations Connect*, a publication about the 30 discussions held on campuses throughout Illinois: [www.siu.edu/offices/iii](http://www.siu.edu/offices/iii) or call 618-453-1186

## Generations Connect Survey: Students and retirees responses “We need more time together.”

and the other through the U of I Extension in Mount Prospect, in cooperation with several high schools and senior centers.

Illinois has taken a giant step forward to strengthen education through a growing resource, retirees. Presidents and chancellors understand that retirees have boundless potential. If we don't make them part of the plan for higher education, we neglect a rich resource.

What's next? First, campus plans will establish an ongoing system to involve retirees. Second, the next wave of Generations Connect 2007 meetings is being planned. These projects will symbolically weave the strands of age and culture together and increase the momentum for intergenerational leadership.

**W**hen asked how older and younger generations could make the world a better place, the Generations Connect participants said create a climate of understanding.

The 500+ retirees, educators, and students who participated in the Generations Connect meetings completed a 12-question survey about the needs and contributions of younger and older generations, their perceptions of what they could do together, their ideas on leadership, and the importance of learning more about other generations.

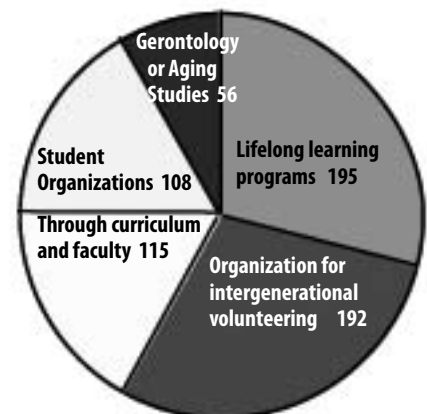
The most telling finding was that 69.4% of those who completed the survey felt they would benefit from more frequent contact with other generations. Clearly retirees and students find commonalities and similarities and believe it is in their best interest to work together or to at least have regular contact. Administrators and faculty can use this recommendation as a planning point in addressing challenges, such as retention, access and remediation.

Several noteworthy responses came from the question: What is the best way to connect

generations on campus? The responses were thorough: lifelong learning programs, a specific program for intergenerational volunteering, the curriculum, and faculty and student organizations.

Participants also had ideas about leadership. They identified the five most important traits of good leaders as possessing the ability to stimulate action and make things happen, showing respect for those who differ, being a good communicator, inspiring commitment, and having great integrity.

What is the best way to connect generations on campus?





Retirees and students complete their Generations Connect survey forms at Kankakee Community College.

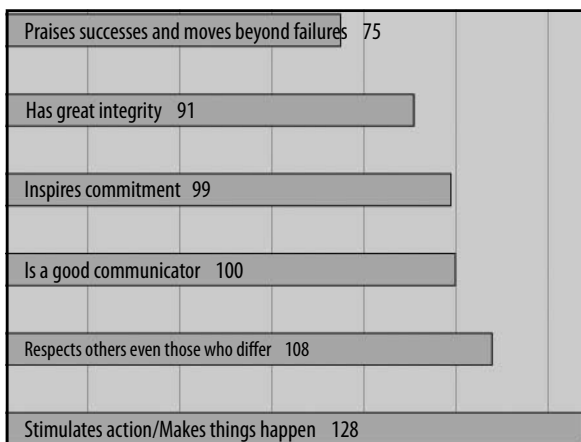
Those who completed the surveys reflected a cross section of the population with 36.8% under 25; 6.7% 26-41; 15.5% of boomer age (42-60); 29.7% 61-80; and 6% 81 and older.

The important needs for young people were education, a direction and purpose in life, positive social relations, and basic needs. The same question for older people was wealth, support systems, health, direction and purpose in life, and education. The most important contributions of young people are enthusiasm (291),

creative ideas (253), helping/supporting other generations (90), and leadership (50). Contributions of older adults were knowledge and experience (332), positive role models (119), helping/supporting other generations (90), understanding and support (75), and sharing life stories (63).

For further information, see the Generations Connect publication or survey report on the website [www.siu.edu/offices/iii](http://www.siu.edu/offices/iii)

### The characteristics of a good leader



### How Can Generations Make the World a Better Place?

- Create a climate of understanding.
- Organize a volunteer system to involve all ages,
- Raise the bar for achievement in education and retirement
- Promote wellness for all ages.

## Coming

March 12, 2007

### An International Celebration of Stories and Writing

sponsored by  
Senate President Emil Jones Jr.  
Center for Intergenerational  
Leadership, SIUC  
American Family History  
Institute

held at  
Chicago State University

[www.siu.edu/offices/iii](http://www.siu.edu/offices/iii)

# Aging is an Asset ... for the World

A partnership in Illinois presents an opportunity to learn about the stories and policy experiences of other countries

**F**ar away countries and continents may seem removed from Illinois, yet there are many similarities. Two of the important ones are the aging population and the importance of education.

These two factors prompted Illinois Senate President Emil Jones Jr. to invite Chicago Consul Generals to participate in a discussion about how older generations can share their wisdom with younger generations.

"Every country experiences unique struggles and demands," Jones said, "and as a result we don't take time to think about less visible resources, such as the contributions of our elders and how they could have a greater impact on educational success."

Jones described a profession-bending experience when he was elected to the General Assembly. Other legislators told him to sit next to someone he didn't know.



Senate President Emil Jones Jr. speaks to Consul Generals in Chicago about finding common ground as we all experience an aging population. He encouraged everyone to tell their stories and share their history.

"I have made a practice of doing that," he said, "and I have a better understanding of people in all parts of Illinois and of the hundreds of cultures represented in our state. Sitting next to someone we don't know might also apply to the aging world, a common challenge to all countries, where for the first time in history, there will be a greater number of aged people than youth."

The first meeting took place in President Jones' Chicago office. Four continents and

twelve countries were represented, including Asia, Africa, Europe and North America, as well as China, Japan, the Philippines, Germany, South Africa, Austria, Bosnia/Herzegovina, Canada, Israel, India, Serbia and the Czech Republic. The group shared stories and policy experiences about aging that crossed generations. Jones said, "We in America can learn from other cultures about

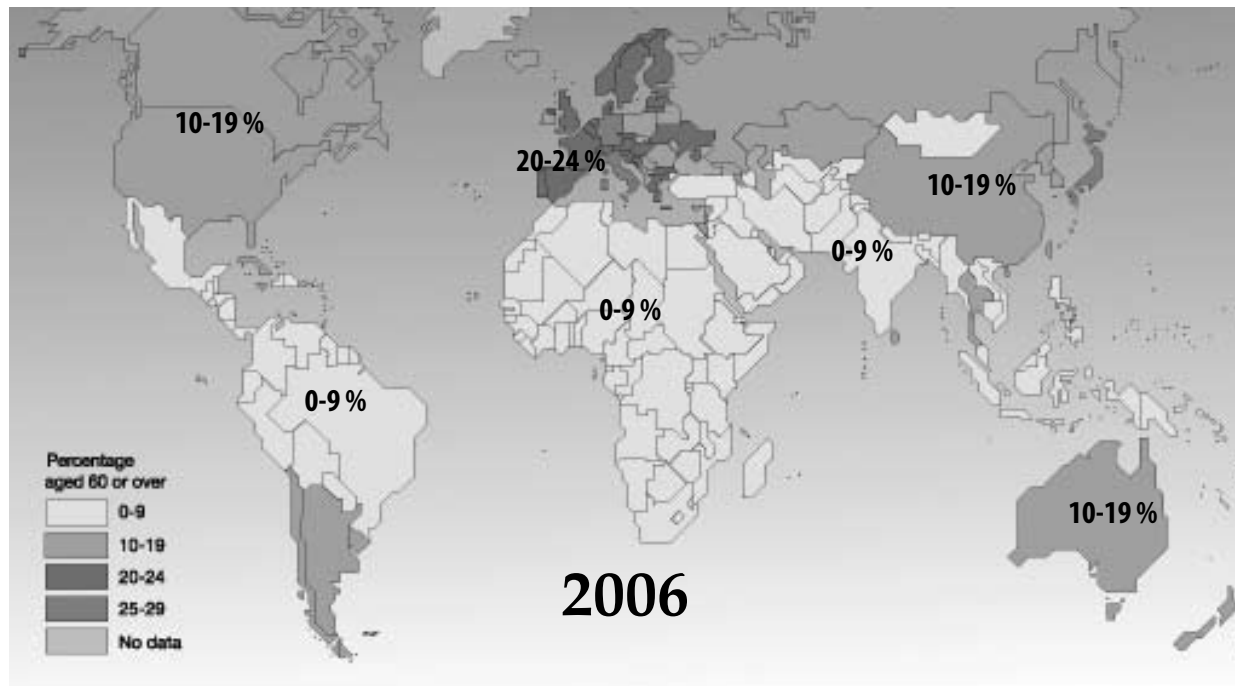
respect for older people. As global partners, we can agree that education is vital to our countries and that older people have the wisdom and experience to help young people."

*All our stories matter. Our stories define who we are, where we came from, and what our ancestors experienced. The common thread for all people and all countries is our stories. They come from our basic needs, such as food, shelter, clothing, and raising our children. We gain and learn lessons strength from our stories.*

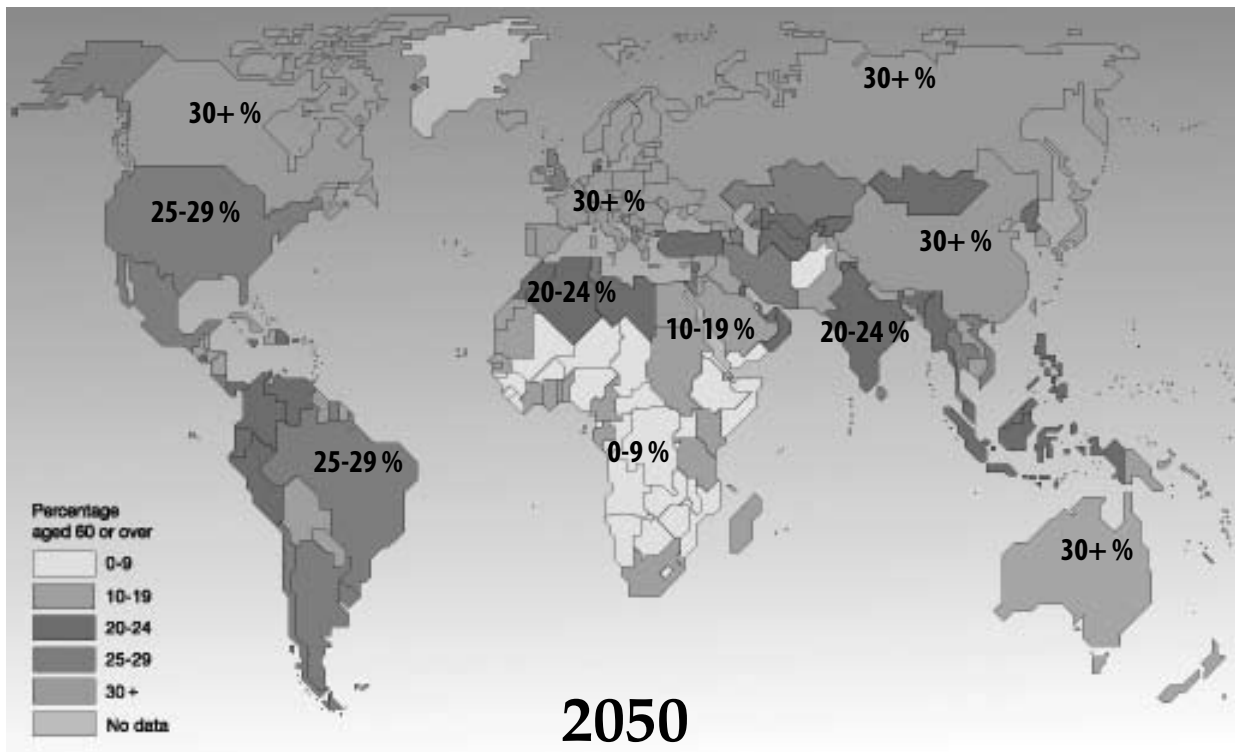
Pat Bearden  
American Family History Institute



## Changes in Population: Percentages of those 60 and older



Compare the population in the 2006 map with the 2050 map. In 2006, most of the world has less than 19% population that is 60 and older, and the great majority, under 9%. Countries with the greatest population are Japan, Germany, and Italy. In 2050 the increase is dramatic. Countries with 30% or greater populations include Australia, many of the European countries, Japan, and China. The United States will have between 25-29%. United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs: Population Division



The following articles or comments were prepared for Continuance Magazine by Chicago consulates. Each depicts a part of the country's story and illustrates our similarities and commonalities as a part of the intergenerational world.

## China



*Jiajie Jiang, Vice Consul  
Education Section  
Chicago Consulate  
People's Republic of China*

The number of persons aged 60 or older in China was about 145 million in 2005, 11 percent of the total population. With the aging rate at 3.28%, there will be about 160 million older people in 2010, and more than 351 million in 2030 in China. With a population of more than 1.3 billion, China will adhere to its One-Child Policy, which accelerates the pace of aging. In 2050, one person out of every three will be age 60 or older. The Senior Citizen's Work Committee was set up in 1999. It makes policies concerning senior citizens to ensure that they live happy lives.

The explosion of knowledge, which has been fully demonstrated in rapid development in recent years in China, the fierce competition in

job markets, and exposure to the different values of foreign cultures constitute a great challenge to government and education institutions, as well as to parents and grandparents. The "China Youth Caring Committee" is playing a rather important role in the education of the younger generation by recruiting retirees to offer training programs and lectures and to make investigations concerning all kinds of problems that students face so that the government can make good education policies.

Grandparents in China also play an important role in the growth of youth. They prefer to live with their sons or daughters to free them from housework so that they can do well in the competitive society. Grandparents will also help make sure their grandchildren have adequate nutrition, do their homework well, and do not develop bad behaviors, such as drug abuse or gambling. In "Continuing Schools for Seniors," many grandparents learn cooking skills, about balanced diets for students, and how to communicate well with their grandchildren.

However, China has much more to do about education in an aging world. The work of the "China Youth Caring Committee" has not yet fully extended to the countryside, where more than

## India

*Honorable Arun Kumar  
Consul General*

*"The story of helping and sharing of concerns between the older and younger generations is the problem of the future in most countries of the world due to the aging of the population.*

*A real effort is required in educating and recognizing this basic fact of an aging population and the inherent social health problems that the older generations have to face. A joint effort of the world is required in recognizing the role of the older generation."*

## China (continued)

70 percent of the aged persons live, where the illiteracy of aged persons is as high as 57%, and where aged persons rely on their children rather than on their pensions.

China needs to learn from other countries about promoting the welfare of the aged, about intergenerational relationships and about how the aged can help educate the young.

## Germany



*Honorable Wolfgang Drautz  
Consul General Federal Republic of Germany*

Like many developed countries, Germany has an aging (in 2030 about 30% of Germans will be older than 60) and a shrinking population. The birth rate is one of the lowest in Europe. The number of single households and young urban professionals without children is increasing. The number of people who pay contributions into the public health and social security system is sinking, and the percentage of old and sick people who need help and medical treatment is increasing. The existing social network and its financing are, in the long run, not sustainable.

Therefore, government and politicians are seeking reforms of the social security system. A new balance between individual and public social responsibility for older people has to be found. Private initiative and public commitment must be complementary to one another.

Because of the European Union with free movement of people and considering the influx of immigrants from non-EU countries, all national solutions must be embedded in a European concept as well.

Meanwhile adaptations, i.e. in the fields of labor law, architecture and education, are taking place. Globalization offers chances and challenges to overcome the arising problems in an aging society.

## Japan



*Junko Tamaki representing Honorable Yutaka Yoshizawa, Consul General*

When I was a child in Okinawa, Japan, my grandmother, who lived to be 102, often told stories about her experiences, including the war. From her, I learned about life and how to live, no matter what happens. Such lessons cannot be found in textbooks.

In Japan, as in America, the connection between the elderly and the youth is increasingly distant. Yet, the elderly are

## Consul Generals and their Delegates

Senate President Emil Jones Jr., welcomed the Chicago Consul Generals to his office.

Participants: Consul General Wolfgang Drautz, Federal Republic of Germany; Consul General Arun Kumar, India; Consul General Filomena Primorac Nikolic, Bosnia & Herzegovina; Consul General Elesila C. Cabrera, Philippines; Consul General Desko Nikitovic, Republic of Serbia; Jiajie Jiang, Consul for Education, People's Republic of China; Deputy Consul Gernot Wiedner, Austria and Sonja Gladysz, Austrian Consulate; Vice Consul Tiego Motlhamme, South Africa; Larry Brown, Consul for Education, Israel; Junko Tamaki representing Consul General Yutaka Yoshizawa, Japan; Susan Evans, Canadian Consulate; Marie Payes, Representing Consul General Marek Skolil, Czech Republic and Steven Haymes, department of Education, Policy Studies and Research, DePaul University

Sponsors of the event, in addition to Jones were Jane Angelis, Center for Intergenerational Leadership, Southern Illinois University Carbondale, Pat Bearden, American Family History Institute; and Donna Butts, Generations United, Washington, D.C.

### Japan continued

the fabric of our society, who can transfer wisdom to future generations. We should embrace them fully.

## Austria

*Consul Gernot Wiedner*

There are several projects in Austria that encourage solidarity between the generations. The aim of these projects is primarily to advance intergenerational communication and the intergenerational transfer of values.

One of the Best Practice Models is the association “Verein Generationentheater -Erinnerungstheater” in Vienna ([www.gewien.at](http://www.gewien.at)), which is supported partly by the Federal Ministry for Social Security, Generations and Consumer Protection. The mission of this association is the exchange of experiences to foster better understanding between generations. Elderly participants create theatre based on their own memories, so the younger generations can watch their experiences performed on stage. Stimulated by these stories, older audience members remember past events from their own lives, enabling them, in turn, to create new plays.

Another Best Practice Model is the association “Verein Wissensbörse,” which encourages the communication of knowledge and experience between generations. The association brings together those who want to pass on their experience, knowledge and skills and those who are curious and want to learn new things.

The European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research ([www.euro.centre.org](http://www.euro.centre.org)) has also published a reference book that provides information on setting up intergenerational projects, titled “Miteinander voneinander lernen – ein Trainingshandbuch zum Aufbau generationenübergreifender Projekte” ([www.euro.centre.org/detail.php?xml\\_id=468](http://www.euro.centre.org/detail.php?xml_id=468)).

## General Bosnia/Herzegovina

*Honorable Filomena Primorac Nikolic  
Consul General*

My story – My Grandma: I come from Europe, actually from Bosnia and Herzegovina. As a child I was supposed to go to the kindergarten to be in the company of children of the same ages, teachers and nannies. I didn’t like kindergarten but I had a wonderful grandmother and I was fond of her. She taught my younger brother and me many things – the first letters, the first drawings, the first tales ...

The most important detail: She was fond of children and she always invited people to our home. Actually she taught my brother and me how to love life, how to share moments with friends. My grandmother was so popular among our friends.

She was fond of young people, and she continued to share our company in our teen-age days and later when we became parents, she accepted our children with the same warmth. Today, I recognize her in myself. I like to share company with young people to exchange my experiences and my knowledge of certain things, etc. Also, I like to listen to young people, and many times I correct my opinion toward theirs.

Nowadays, young people live separately from parents and other older family members. The connections among them are rarer and rarer. In my opinion, the connection between different generations should be stronger. Working together they could improve education, and each generation would have a chance to gain something from that relationship. Some of them could gain enthusiasm, and some of them, life experience.

## Czech Republic

Borek Lizec, Consul, Czech Republic

“We share your opinion about the importance of the phenomenon of the aging population as much here in the United States, as well as in our country, the Czech Republic and in the whole of Europe.”

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# Reading Program opens doors for children

*Reading might seem a simple task, but when one sees a child struggling to read the word "basketball" it is obvious that help and guidance are needed. Reading is a way of communicating and gaining knowledge, and it should not be a chore for children. It should be something they will love to do for the rest of their lives.*

Danielle Dalo  
Continuance Intern

The laughter of children echoes through the hallways of the Eurma Hayes Center as you enter. All but one door is left open, welcoming everyone to discover a story. One wall of the room housing the "I Can Read" program is covered with books for pupils from kindergarten to fifth grade. Children gather around each other on a brightly colored carpet to share the stories they've read; they seem anxious to talk about the mysteries they've solved, the fantasies they've dreamt, and the adventures they've had.

One-on-one reading is the centerpiece of the I Can Read Program.



Margaret Nesbitt asks the students about their new books and the lessons they learned.

Yet some children are struggling to discover these magical stories on their own. Many children have a difficult time developing their reading skills in school. According to the 2003 National Assessment of Education Progress, "37 percent of fourth-graders cannot read at the basic level."

"I Can Read," an 8-year-old program, strives to enhance reading skills for children in the Carbondale elementary schools. "We call it a vision," said Margaret Nesbitt, the program's coordinator and one of its founders. "We want to reach out to the students and mold them to become prepared for higher education."

The program is based on the principles that reading is an important skill and that the lack of good reading skills will become an obstacle for many children. Nesbitt stresses that it is important to start early in a child's learning process to develop the necessary skills to build a foundation that will create a love of reading.

Nesbitt is a member of the Class of 1948 at the former Attucks High School in Carbondale. Although she and some classmates came up with the idea for "I Can Read" that year, it did not become an official program until 50 years later.

"There were other programs in



*We want to reach out to the students and mold them to become prepared for higher education.*

this area that assisted children with the same needs as we do," Nesbitt said. She referred to programs that are offered through schools, churches and other community organizations. Eventually, the Attucks alumni gave financial support to form an education committee to help organize and pursue the program. "When we presented our idea to the city council, they went for it," Nesbitt said. The program received financial support and space in Carbondale's Eurma Hayes Center.

As children in the program are growing their love of reading, many parents are pleased with how the program is helping, Nesbitt said. She emphasized that program sessions are not intended to be child care; "I Can Read" is a serious educational program that she encourages the children to take seriously. "For the first time, I had to suspend a student for two weeks because he wasn't doing what he was supposed to be doing during his time here," Nesbitt said.

Each child who attends a session is required to chose a story and read as much of it as possible by the end of the day. Before the children are dismissed for the



Students present their stories with help from Ella Lacey, emerita from SIU Carbondale School of Medicine

evening, they are expected to stand before the other students and instructors and explain what they read. Nesbitt appreciates the monetary grants and donations from the community that have provided books, reading games and computers. Supporters have included the Rotary Club of Carbondale, the Laborers' International Union of North America and the Freewill Baptist Church in Carbondale. However, the program is still lacking one key aspect.

"We need volunteers," Nesbitt said. The program is available to elementary school children in Carbondale, but is not able to accommodate as many as organizers would like because of the lack of volunteers. Currently, 20 students attend sessions regularly, and there are eight volunteers.

"If we can get more volunteers to come here, they will see the need," Nesbitt said. The program's staff consists of members of the community: neighborhood residents and volunteers from churches, schools and Southern Illinois University Carbondale. The program needs more volunteers to develop the opportunity for one-on-one reading time with children. Nesbitt said the children are allowed to read by themselves, but one-on-one sessions are beneficial. Nesbitt can be contacted at (618) 457-4995.

Danielle Dalo is a Continuance Intern for the Fall Semester 2006. She is a sophomore Journalism major at SIU Carbondale from Oswego.



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# Lifelong Learning

## Learning Later, Living Greater: The Secret for Making the Most of Your After-50 Years.

Nancy Merz Nordstrom

**E**arly on a warm August morning in 1993 I awoke to find myself a widow at age 48, with four children, the youngest just 15. Three years later, after the fog caused by my husband's unexpected death had lifted, I returned to school. It had been more than twenty-five years since I was a student.

When I walked across the academic threshold at age 51, I felt and acted old. In short, I was old! Over the course of two years I underwent a complete rejuvenation, a higher quality rejuvenation than any spa or resort could ever hope to provide. In fact, I felt as though I had found the fountain of youth.

I emerged from my studies full of zest, joy and enthusiasm. I was more alive than I had been in years. Henry Ford's comments, "Anyone who stops learning is old, whether they are 20 or 80. Anyone who keeps learning is young," certainly applied to me.

Being back in school did for me what therapy, grief counseling and the passage of time could not do. It gave me back not just a life, but an enhanced life—a life

with increased self-esteem, focus and vitality. In a way I had been given a second chance, and I felt it was critically important to make the most of that chance. I also felt that I wanted to leave some kind of legacy about how one can remake a life when the unexpected happens, not only for my own descendants, but for all those who would walk that same road.

The opportunity to do that came shortly after my schooling was completed. I joined the Elderhostel organization, the world's first and largest educational travel organization for older adults. Their mission as the "pre-eminent provider of high quality affordable educational opportunities for older adults," was the perfect fit for me as an advocate of how lifelong learning can change and enrich your life. Elderhostel believes that "learning is a lifelong process and sharing new ideas, challenges and experiences is rewarding in every season of life." These were exactly my feelings.

As the director of the Elderhostel

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*Learning is a treasure that will follow its owner everywhere.*

Chinese proverb

Institute Network I found myself immersed in lifelong learning. Sometimes known as continuing learning, it's learning for the sheer joy of learning, or learning not dictated by academic requirements. For the purposes of this article, however, we'll use the term lifelong learning.

Time and time again, I spoke with people whose lives, like mine, had been changed by the power of this incredible tool. It was an important validating experience for me, proving over and over that lifelong learning in any form, and at any age, but especially as an older adult, could transform lives.

Lifelong learning in later years is the perfect opportunity for people to take part in all the things they have never had time for. Here is an opportunity for people from all walks of life, who have been busy working and/or raising a family, to travel and socialize, all the while expanding their knowledge and wisdom.

Lifelong learning is not exclusive. It doesn't matter what form your work life took, anyone and everyone is welcome to indulge.

Yet, every working day I also realized that many people knew

little or nothing about this vehicle for enhancing their later years. Of course, everyone is, to some extent, a lifelong learner. Reading books, newspapers, and magazines, taking up a hobby or doing crosswords is considered informal learning. But what I'm talking about is a more formal type of lifelong learning—non-credit courses in classrooms, educational travel programs, and learning that takes place through meaningful community service.

The Elderhostel Institute Network, serves approximately 100,000 people through formal non-credit classroom programs. But, there are millions more out there, including people already retired, the soon-to-retire Baby Boomers, and even younger generations who know little or nothing about learning programs and the value lifelong learning brings to our later years.

*Learning Later, Living Greater* is a breezy, up-beat look at lifelong learning in three different ways: in the classroom, through educational travel, and in the community. Imparting the message about the value of lifelong learning has become my passion. I want to tell you to throw out all your old memories about what being in school was like. As an older adult returning to school, for credit or just for fun, it's an entirely new and very different experience.

And I want to reassure you that your past academic attainments have no bearing whatsoever on joining a lifelong learning



program. Forget degrees and all the credentials that society confers on us. All you need is the desire to keep your mind active and alert and an innate curiosity about the world around us.

Gone are the "talking heads," rote memorization and test-taking. In their place are facilitators eager to learn as much from you as you are from them, welcoming the give and take of lively discussion, rich with life experiences. There is no greater way of learning than by sharing many different viewpoints of a spirited discussion. So, if your previous academic experiences were negative, forget them. If they were positive, know that lifelong learning as an older adult will far surpass them.

Philosopher John Dewey said it best, "...Education must be reconceived, not as merely a preparation for maturity (whence our absurd idea that it should stop after adolescence) but as a continuous growth of the mind

and a continuous illumination of life...real education comes after we leave school and there is no reason why it should stop before death."

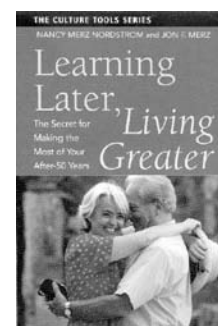
Lifelong learning, no matter what its form, is an incredibly important tool in helping you find life satisfaction. Life, especially in the "After-50" years, is all about choices and opportunities. Having choices and opportunities are what makes life worth living. It gives us a reason to get up in the morning. Every day we are given new choices and opportunities. It's the way we select them that gives our life meaning.

If you decide lifelong learning has a place in your life, seek out the opportunities in your community. I can just about guarantee that a year from now your life will be richer, fuller and far more satisfying.

Prior to joining Elderhostel, Nordstrom spent many years working in both the private and non-profit sectors before returning to school to earn her M.Ed. in Adult Education. She directs the Elderhostel Institute Network, North America's largest educational network for older adults with more than 360 affiliated lifelong learning institutes.

Nancy Merz Nordstrom is the author of "Learning Later, Living Greater: The Secret for Making the Most of Your After-50 Years."

[www.learninglater.com](http://www.learninglater.com)



## Lifelong Learning Programs in Illinois

Black Hawk College  
Seniors Program  
301 42<sup>nd</sup> Avenue  
East Moline, IL 61244  
Contact: Barbara Virtue  
(309) 755-2200  
[bvirtue@bhc.edu](mailto:bvirtue@bhc.edu)

Bradley University  
Institute for Learning in Retirement  
1501 W. Bradley Avenue  
Peoria, IL 61625  
Contact: Jon C. Neidy, Assistant  
Director, Continuing Education  
(309) 677-3594  
[neidy@bradley.edu](mailto:neidy@bradley.edu)

City Colleges of Chicago and Chicago  
Dept. on Aging  
Central West Senior Center  
2102 W. Ogden Ave  
Regional Director Patricia Stovall  
312-746-5300  
[PStovall@cityofchicago.org](mailto:PStovall@cityofchicago.org)

Northwest (Copernicus) Senior Center  
3160 N. Milwaukee Ave  
Regional Director Merrie Star  
312-744-6681  
[MStar@cityofchicago.org](mailto:MStar@cityofchicago.org)

Southwest Senior Center  
6117 S. Kedzie Ave  
Regional Director Karen Zboril  
312-747-0440  
[KZoril@cityofchicago.org](mailto:KZoril@cityofchicago.org)

Northeast (Levy) Senior Center  
2019 W. Lawrence Ave  
Regional Director Paula Basta  
312-744-0784  
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Southeast (Atlas) Senior Center  
1767 E. 79th St.  
Regional Director Robin Tillotson  
312-747-0189  
[-SN00056@cityofchicago.org](mailto:-SN00056@cityofchicago.org)

Renaissance Court (Cultural Center)  
78 E. Washington St  
Director Patricia O'Malley  
312-744-4550  
Renaissance Ct. Patricia O'Malley  
[POmalley@cityofchicago.org](mailto:POmalley@cityofchicago.org)

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Older Adult Institute  
22<sup>nd</sup> and Lambert Road  
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College of Lake County  
Discovery  
1120 S. Milwaukee  
Vernon Hills, IL 60061  
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Chicago, IL 60604  
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Harper College  
1200 Algonquin Road  
Palatine, IL 60067  
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Freeport, IL 61032-9341  
Contract: Mike Shore  
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Illinois Central College  
Community Education/Fun Shops  
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Peoria, IL 61602  
Contact: Diana McKinney  
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Senior Professionals  
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Normal, IL 61790  
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Kankakee Community College  
Seniority  
River Road, P.O. Box 888  
Kankakee, IL 60901  
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Kaskaskia College  
Senior College  
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Centralia, IL 62801  
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Older Adults/Community Ed.  
21193 Malta Road  
Malta, IL 60150  
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[stefani@kishwaukeecccollege.edu](mailto:stefani@kishwaukeecccollege.edu)

Lincoln Land Community College  
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Springfield, IL 62794  
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John A. Logan College  
700 Logan College Road  
Carterville, IL 62918  
Contact: Mabel Hayes  
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[mabelhayes@jalc.edu](mailto:mabelhayes@jalc.edu)

McHenry County College  
Retired Adult Program (RAP)  
8900 U.S. Highway 14  
Crystal Lake, IL 60012-2761  
Contact: Cindy Kearns  
(815) 479-7605  
[ckearns@mchenry.edu](mailto:ckearns@mchenry.edu)

Moraine Valley Community College  
Programs for Older Adults  
10900 South 88th Avenue  
Palos Hills, IL 60465  
Contact: Kathleen Stearns  
(708) 974-4300  
[KStearns@morainevalley.edu](mailto:KStearns@morainevalley.edu)

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Lifelong Learning Institute  
5202 Old Orchard Road  
Skokie, IL 60077  
Contact: Maria Malayter  
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[Mmalayter@nl.edu](mailto:Mmalayter@nl.edu)

Northern Illinois University  
Gerontology  
Dekalb, IL 60115  
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Northwestern University  
Osher Lifelong Learning Institute  
405 Church Street  
Evanston, IL 60201  
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(847) 491-7724  
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Oakton Community College  
1600 East Golf Road  
DesPlaines, IL 60016  
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Parkland College  
Lifelong Learning Institute  
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Prairie State College  
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Rend Lake College  
Institute of Learning in Retirement  
468 N. Ken Gray Parkway  
Ina, Illinois 62846  
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Richland Community College  
Etc. for Seniors  
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Rock Valley College  
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Roosevelt University  
Lifelong Learning  
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Carl Sandburg College  
College for Senior Citizens  
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Southern IL Learning in Retirement  
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University of Illinois at Urbana-  
Champaign  
Personal & Prof. Enrichment Programs  
Office of Continuing Education  
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Champaign, IL 61820  
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Waubonsee Community College  
Institute for Learning in Retirement  
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Western Illinois University  
LIFE (Life is ForEver)  
1 University Circle  
Macomb, IL 61455  
Carolyn Bowman  
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## Lifelong

Lifelong is a coalition of Illinois older learner programs sponsored by the Illinois Community College Board and the Center for Intergenerational Leadership, SIU Carbondale

The group meets twice a year to share information on programming, courses, recruitment, and service.

Officers include:  
Anita Revelle, Il State University  
Margaret Plaskas Waubonsee CC  
Cheryl Barber, UIUC  
John Allen, Lincoln Land CC  
Mike Shore, Highland CC

The Sponsors are:  
Preston Morgan  
Illinois Community College Board:  
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## Intergenerational Issues

### The Maturing of America

#### Getting communities on track for an aging population

Source: MetLife

**A** new report led by the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a) and funded by MetLife Foundation, finds that only 46% of American communities have begun planning to address the needs of the exploding population of aging Baby Boomers. The Baby Boom generation—born between 1946 and 1964—is rapidly approaching retirement age. When this trend hits its peak in 2030, the number of people over age 65 in the United States will soar to 71.5 million—twice their number in the year 2000—or one in every five Americans.

“Beyond traditional aging services such as senior centers, meals-on-wheels programs, and home care, communities clearly need to reassess their policies, programs and services in the areas of transportation, housing, land use planning, public safety, parks and recreation, workforce development and volunteerism/civic engagement,” said Sandy Markwood, CEO, National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a). “To respond to the rapid rise in their aging population, communities will

need to provide larger street signage, accessible housing, age appropriate fitness programs, as well as lifelong learning and job re-training opportunities. Although targeted to an aging population, these services would improve the quality of life for citizens of all ages.”

The survey was conducted through a partnership with n4a and the International City/County Management Association, the National Association of Counties, the National League of Cities and Partners for Livable Communities. Questionnaires were sent to local governments asking about their “aging readiness.” The results show that although many communities have some programs to address the needs of older adults, very few have undertaken a comprehensive assessment of what it would take to make their community “elder friendly.” New England and Pacific Coast regions consistently show higher percentages of service availability and/or provision than other areas of the country.

“Though there are many positive findings, this report is a wake-

up call,” added Markwood. “As the first of the Baby Boomers turn 60 this year, communities should begin planning to address this major demographic trend. We hope this report encourages community leaders to take proactive measures, spurred by the many cities and counties whose examples are demonstrating the many ways to make life better for older adults and those who care for them, and by doing so, strengthening the entire communities in the process.”

Key findings of the report include the following:

1. Health Care - In one third of communities surveyed, older adults do not have access to a range of needed preventive health care services such as health education, community-based health screenings, and counseling on prescription drug programs.
2. Nutrition - 80% of communities have programs providing home-delivered meals for older adults, though only 25% provide nutrition education for seniors.
3. Exercise - More than one-third of communities do not have fitness

programs for older adults, though 86% report having biking/walking trails.

4. Transportation - Many communities are not addressing the mobility needs of an aging population. For example, only 56% of communities reported having "dial a ride" or door-through-door transportation services and only 40% of communities reported having road signage that meets the needs of older drivers.

5. Public Safety / Emergency Services - More than 33% of communities do not have a system to locate older adults in case they become ill or wander due to Alzheimer's or other forms of dementia and 70% report that they do not have prevention programs on elder abuse and neglect.

6. Housing - Only half the communities reported having home modification programs which adapt the existing homes of older adults to address physical limitations, an important concern since it's known that the vast majority prefer to remain in their own homes as they age.

7. Taxation and Finance - Over a third of communities do not provide tax relief for older adults living on limited incomes.

8. Workforce Development - Over 40% of communities do not offer formal job training and retraining programs to help older adults remain in the workforce. However 45% of communities reported that

discounts were provided at local colleges and universities to older adults interested in taking classes.

9. Civic Engagement / Volunteer Opportunities - More than 60% of U.S. communities provide civic engagement/volunteer opportunities, including those for older adults. The vast majority of the opportunities are offered through Senior Corp programs such as the Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), Senior Companions and Foster Grandparents.

10. Aging / Human Services - Although it is expected that aging baby boomers will demand it, many communities do not offer a comprehensive single point of entry for information and access to all aging services.

"The Maturing of America" assessment began in November 2005 with the project's first phase - a survey sent to thousands of local governments. The data was then analyzed to determine the "aging readiness" of America. The study was designed to address three key preparedness questions: whether efforts are being made to assess and put into place programs, policies and services that address the needs of older adults and their caregivers; whether cities and counties can ensure that their communities are "livable" for all ages - not only good places to grow up, but good places to grow old; and how well equipped an area is to harness the talent, wisdom and experience of older adults to contribute to

their community. A more in-depth survey was then sent to 500 communities whose initial responses indicated a high degree of preparedness.

"The aging of the population will have a dramatic impact on America's cities and counties," said Sibyl Jacobson, president of MetLife Foundation. "This report has something for all of us. It sheds light on how our towns and cities can prepare to handle the aging boom. By taking action now, communities can avoid problems and improve the quality of life for all citizens as well as for older adults."

#### About the Participating Organizations

National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a) - A leading voice on aging issues for Area Agencies on Aging across the country and a champion for Title VI-Native American aging programs in our nation's capital. Through its presence in Washington, D.C., n4a advocates on behalf of the local aging agencies to ensure that needed resources and support services are available to older Americans and their caregivers. For more information, go to [www.n4a.org](http://www.n4a.org).

MetLife Foundation - Established in 1976 by MetLife to carry on its long-standing tradition of corporate contributions and community involvement. The Foundation has been involved in a variety of aging-related initiatives addressing issues of caregiving, intergenerational activities, mental

fitness, health and wellness programs and civic involvement. Since 1986, the Foundation has supported research on Alzheimer's disease through its Awards for Medical Research program and has contributed more than \$10 million to efforts to find a cure. More information about the Foundation is available at [www.metlife.org](http://www.metlife.org).

International City/County Management Association (ICMA) - A professional and educational organization for chief appointed managers, administrators, and assistants in cities, towns, counties, and regional entities throughout the world. For more information, go to [www.icma.org](http://www.icma.org).

National Association of Counties (NACo) - A national organization that represents county governments in the United States. For more information, go to [www.naco.org](http://www.naco.org).

National League of Cities (NLC) - The largest national organization representing municipal governments throughout the United States. For more information, go to [www.nlc.org](http://www.nlc.org).

Partners for Livable Communities (PLC) - A national, nonprofit organization working to restore and renew our communities. For more information, go to [www.livable.com](http://www.livable.com).

For further information contact:  
N4A, Lisa Cohen, 310-395-2544  
[lisa.cohen32@verizon.net](mailto:lisa.cohen32@verizon.net) or  
MetLife Joe Madden, 401-827-2015  
[jmadden@metlife.com](mailto:jmadden@metlife.com)

### **Ten Best Practices for Communities to Consider To Address the Needs of an Aging Population**

1. Preventive health care, such as health and "lifestyle" education, immunizations and screenings, to reduce injuries and the onset of chronic diseases, as well as a range of in-home health assistance to help people stay in their homes longer.
2. Nutrition education to promote healthy eating throughout a person's lifespan, as well as nutritious community-sponsored programs such as home-delivered meals for those who have difficulty or are unable to prepare their own meals.
3. Age-appropriate fitness programs and recreational facilities that offer walking trails, benches, fitness equipment.
4. Larger, easier-to-read road signage, grooved lane dividers, reflective road markings and dedicated left-turn lanes. Driver assessments and training to promote safe driving for all ages, especially after strokes or other health incidents. Transportation options for people who cannot or do not want to drive.
5. Special planning and training to help public safety personnel and other first responders locate and assist older adults during emergencies and disasters.
6. Home modification programs that make necessary adjustments for people with special needs. Zoning and subdivision plans that promote a variety of affordable, accessible housing located near medical, commercial and other desired services, as well as shared housing options for older adults and their caregivers.
7. Tax assistance and property-tax relief for those in financial need and programs to protect older adults against fraud and abuse.
8. Job training, re-training and lifelong learning opportunities, as well as flexible employment options to attract and retain older workers.
9. Opportunities to engage older adults in community boards and commissions, as well as purposeful volunteer activities in local government and non-profit organizations.
10. Single point of entry for information and access to ALL aging information and services in the community, and the strategic expansion of necessary services to support the older adults to age with dignity and independence in their home and community.

SOURCE: 2006 "Maturing of America" study

# "When the going gets tough, I go to grandma's."

## Grandparents Raising Grandchildren

Barbara Schwartz

**M**any of us have fond memories from childhood that involve a grandparent. Today's families are changing and these special relationships are more important than ever.

Grandparents can provide a link to our past, our roots, our history, our legacy. They can make their grandchildren feel special by giving them undivided time and attention. They can be confidants and mentors, sharing interests, teaching skills and helping children to develop positive attitudes about aging. They can assist parents who become stressed or overwhelmed – pulled in too many directions at once.

Today, grandparenting is not about old age. The average age of grandparents are between 49 and 53. In the United States, 70 million individuals are grandparents. The majority are healthy, active and educated. The grandparent's role can vary from involved to remote. The degree of closeness between a grandparent and a grandchild develops through frequency of

contact, geographic arrangements; and attitudes about the value and importance of the relationship. For those grandparents who do not live near their grandchildren, relationships can be supported by exchanging books, making tapes, mailing pictures, artwork, school newspapers, journals and through e-mail.

All of us—children, families and society—benefit from strong grandparent/grandchild relationships, summed up beautifully in the words of Helen Keller; "The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen, or even touched; they must be felt with the heart."

Yet not all grandparents fill the traditional role associated with grandparenting. In Illinois, according to the 2000 Census, more than 213,000 children under the age of 18 are being raised by a grandparent. More than 100,000 grandparents reported they are responsible for the full-time care of their grandchildren. Most of these caregivers are younger than 60, and when you add other relatives caring for children - aunts, uncles and siblings - the

number is astonishing!

They might live in your neighborhood, work in your office, attend your church, synagogue, or mosque. You might see them at the grocery store, bank, gas station or your child's school. It can happen to anyone for any reason, regardless of age, income, ethnic background or educational level. No one is exempt. Children live with relatives for a number of reasons, including death of a parent, divorce, neglect, abuse, substance or alcohol abuse, military duty, mental illness or parental incarceration. It can happen to anyone for any reason, regardless of age, income, ethnic background or educational level.

The issues these families face are complex. Too often relatives struggle alone, unaware of services available to help them, unsure of how to access services and intimidated or frustrated by the process. Many relatives spend their savings or struggle month to month to provide clothing, counseling, education or medical attention for the children. Many quit working in order to care for children; others return to work or

## ***To Grandparents Raising Grandchildren:***

***You are not alone. You are appreciated and are an inspiration to all of us.***

take a second job in order to afford the additional expenses of raising children. Many neglect their own needs and health in order to provide for the children. Often they feel guilty, angry, helpless and sometimes resentful of the situation.

And yet there is the joy and pride they feel when children begin to excel in school, sleep through the night or graduate from high school or college. There is the peace that comes from knowing the children are in a safe, stable and loving home. Without these relatives thousands of children would be in foster care.

Consider three children, ages 8 weeks, 1 year and 2 years old, who have come to live with their 38-year-old great aunt and her 4-year-old daughter and 15 month-old son. Protective services in Missouri contacted her and placed the children with her under a safety plan. She receives no monetary assistance from the agency; does not qualify for Food Stamps and has no medical card for the children. She needs cribs, diapers, childcare since she works. She is now behind in her mortgage

payments because of the expense of raising additional children.

Or think about the 46-year-old grandmother in the Chicago area whose four grandchildren, ages 4 months, 1 year, 6 years and 8 years old might still be living in a car without her care. The 6-year-old has never received immunizations or been enrolled in school, and the 8-year-old has not been in school for a year. They came to her without coats or clothing, and she has exhausted emergency assistance programs in her area that provide food and formula.

Then there is the 61-year-old great-grandmother who was excited about the renovations she and her husband had made to the home they have lived in for 31 years. Knocking out a wall to expand the living room was the first step. Now, the expanded living room has become a bedroom to accommodate four great-grandchildren ages 9, 7, 3 and 2 who now live with them. Her time is now spent in counseling sessions, doctor's offices, court hearings and volunteering at school.

Where can relatives turn for help? There are many agencies working on behalf of relatives raising children. The Illinois Department on Aging provides support and assistance to relatives of any age who are raising children as well as training and resources to

professionals. There is also help with referrals, emergency needs and accessing services.

Call the Illinois Department on Aging's Senior HelpLine (800-252-8966) or Barb Schwartz (217/-524-5327) for more information.

If you are a professional and would like information, resource materials, training or need to make a referral, please call the numbers listed above. If you are interested in joining the Taskforce for Grandparents Raising Grandchildren, contact the Illinois Department on Aging. The mission of the Illinois Task Force on Grandparents Raising Grandchildren is to identify the evolving issues, challenges, needs and concerns of grandparents and relatives who are raising children in order to impact change necessary at the local, state and federal level.

If you are a "Silent Savior" thank you for the sacrifices you make and for your unselfish dedication and commitment to your family. Consider joining a support group to share experiences and resources with other relatives. If you need assistance please call the numbers listed above. You are not alone. You are appreciated and are an inspiration to all of us.

Barbara Swartz is the director of Grandparents Raising Grandchildren at the Illinois Department on Aging.



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# Awards, Honors and Events

## Students with disabilities honor Kaplan

Kathleen Plesko

Students representing various disability types, one deaf, one blind, several who use wheelchairs, and one with a learning disability, thanked IBHE Chairman James L. Kaplan recently for focusing the Illinois Board of Higher Education on the inclusion of students with disabilities. Although Kaplan's primary purpose in visiting SIUC on September 28 was to celebrate the inauguration of SIU President Glenn Poshard, students could not resist an opportunity to thank Kaplan for his enduring interest in them.

They specifically thanked him for two IBHE funded programs at SIUC: a summer transition camp that almost all the meeting participants had first attended and in subsequent years either



Lucy Sloan, Vice Chair, Illinois Board of Higher Education and Seymour Bryson, Associate Chancellor, Diversity, SIUC honor Chairman James Kaplan



Terry Szawłowski gives Mr. James Kaplan the Champion Award.

volunteered for or worked at and an adapted computer technology initiative that serves to ensure equal access to the educational environment for learners with disabilities.

In a packed River Room at the Student Center, Dr. Seymour Bryson, SIUC associate chancellor for diversity, introduced Kaplan to students with disabilities, who had previously known him only through his work on their behalf. Bryson used the occasion to teach students that one person can make a difference. He said Kaplan personified such a person.

Kaplan honored each of the students by addressing them personally and inquiring about their hometowns and their academic pursuits. He also

discussed the moral obligation to give back through volunteering or otherwise helping others.

The high point of the meeting occurred when SIUC student Terry Szawłowski presented Kaplan with a plaque that described him as "Champion James L. Kaplan."

Kathleen Plesko is director of the Office of Students with Disabilities, SIU Carbondale.

### Coming

**February, March, April  
2007**

### *Generations Connect*

**Intergenerational  
discussions with high  
school, middle School  
and college students and  
retirees**

**Sponsored by university  
and community college  
presidents and school  
superintendents**

[www.siu.edu/offices/iii](http://www.siu.edu/offices/iii)

## Illinois Campus Compact Joins the Carter Foundation to Give Awards

### Three Illinois Universities Win

**S**outhern Illinois University and The Women's Center in Carbondale earned the Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter Partnership Award for Campus-Community Collaboration sponsored by Illinois Campus Compact on November 16. Finalists teaming-up Illinois State University and Illinois Wesleyan University with McLean County Habitat for Humanity earned second place honors; Dominican University and San Miguel School placed third.

Illinois Campus Compact collaborated with the Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter Partnership Foundation to honor universities and community groups who work together to better their communities.

Rosalynn Carter personally announced the winners at the Illinois Campus Compact celebration staged during Campus Compact's 20th Anniversary Gala Mon., Oct. 16 at the Hyatt Regency McCormick Place in Chicago. These three finalists have helped Illinois families educate children in need; build homes for the working poor; and assist victims of domestic violence.

The Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter Award for Campus-Community Collaboration program began in 2000 when President and Mrs. Carter presented the first award in their home state of Georgia. The purpose of their Foundation is to foster service-learning and community development activities among our nation's college-age young men and women, their faculty leaders and community organizations.

Illinois Campus Compact, currently comprised of 39-member universities and college presidents, was established in 1993 by 12 charter institutions. Campus Compact is a national coalition of

nearly 1,000 college and university presidents—representing some 5 million students—who are committed to fulfilling the civic purposes of higher education. As the only national association dedicated to this mission, Campus Compact is a leader in building civic engagement into campus and academic life.

The first place award of \$15,000.00 provided \$7,500.00 for each of the two partners. Additionally, second place partners split \$7,000.00 and third place, \$5,000.00.

For more information, visit [www.illinoiscampuscompact.org](http://www.illinoiscampuscompact.org).

L to R: Stacia Creek, graduate student, SIU Carbondale; Camille Dorris, executive director, Womens Center; Mythili Rundblad, coordinator, Student Development; Larry Dietz, Vice Chancellor Student Affairs, and former First Lady Rosalynn Carter



## McAfoos wins lifelong learning award from the Illinois Community College Trustees Assoc.



L to R: ICCTA president Tom Bennett; Rend Lake College trustee Marvin Scott; McAfoos, and Rend Lake College president Mark Kern

**I**t must be neat to have a grandmother who takes you with her on a regular basis for summer vacations in Europe and visits with family in her native Germany.

Count six kids scattered from Benton, IL, to Muskegon, MI, and Denver, CO, who would agree. They are fortunate to have an active, vibrant “Großmutter” [Editor’s note: or “Grossmutter,” German for grandmother] like Margot McAfoos of Benton. The six grandchildren, who get to take turns going on the annual outings, are not alone in their assessment.

The ICCTA selected Margot McAfoos as its recipient of the 2006 Lifelong Learning Award. She was recognized at the annual Awards Banquet earlier this summer at the President Abraham Lincoln Hotel and Conference Center in Springfield.

“When Rend Lake College established the Institute for Learning in Retirement, I began participating in this program. I’m also a member of the Advisory

Board. I’ve enjoyed the historical bus trips and lectures on local historic persons. I’ve taken Journal Writing and Bible as Literature courses, as well as computer classes. These programs offered by Rend Lake College keep senior adults involved and stimulated. I have always enjoyed learning, and I will continue as long as I am physically able.”

“Rend Lake College established a fitness center and built a pool. In order to keep myself fit and mentally alert, I enrolled and remain to this day a constant student. I also enjoy participating in the opportunities offered by RLC’s Institute for Learning in Retirement. It has and continues to enrich my life.”

“Margot is a true ambassador of Rend Lake College,” wrote Hunt Bonan in his letter of recommendation. Continued Bonan, Chairman of the RLC Board of Trustees and President of the RLC Foundation: “Her enthusiasm encourages older adults to realize the importance of education at all ages. It is with great pleasure and respect that we, the Rend Lake College Board of Trustees, support Margot McAfoos for the 2006 Lifelong Learning Award.”

Thanks to the communication department at Rend Lake College and Kim Villaneuva, Illinois Community College Trustees Association.

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## Coming Events

**March 12, 2007**

*A Celebration of International  
Stories and Writing*

**Sponsored by Senate  
President Emil Jones, Jr., the  
Center for Intergenerational  
Leadership, and the American  
Family History Institute, and  
Consul Generals of Chicago  
Chicago State University**  
[www.siu.edu/offices/iii](http://www.siu.edu/offices/iii)

**February 5, 2007**

*Illinois African American State  
Lawmakers: 1877 to Present*

**Permanent Photographic  
Exhibition  
Chicago State University's  
New Academic Library  
Contact: Dr. Erma Brooks  
Williams 773-995-3822**

**Spring 2007**

*Senate Forum on  
Intergenerational Leadership*

**Sponsored by Senate  
President Emil Jones Jr. and  
Center for Intergenerational  
Leadership, SIU Carbondale  
State Capitol  
Springfield**  
[www.siu.edu/offices/iii](http://www.siu.edu/offices/iii)

**August 19-21, 2007**

*Learning-Leadership-Innovation*  
**Roosevelt University  
Institute/Continued Learning  
Robin Campus  
Schaumburg, Illinois  
icl@roosevelt.edu  
847-619-4242**

**March 7-10, 2007**

*Let's Rethink Aging*  
**Joint Conference American  
Society on Aging (ASA) and  
the National Council on  
Aging (NCOA)  
Chicago  
Sheridan Chicago and Towers**

In our ever-changing society, the phenomenal growth of the older adult population in the United States and around the world is driving some of the most significant social and economic developments of our time. In the face of this transformation, past responses to aging and past perceptions of older adults no longer work. The experience of aging itself is rapidly evolving, forcing us to rethink what it means to grow old.

This not-to-be-missed conference will feature over 900 sessions covering a diverse range of topics in aging. We will showcase innovative programs, foster policy discussion and advocacy, and share cutting-edge research findings.

Over 4,000 ASA and NCOA members and other professionals will come to Chicago to network with colleagues and attend sessions.

[www.agingconference.org](http://www.agingconference.org)

**February 8-9, 2007**

*Pathways to Partnerships II,  
Continuing the Journey*  
**The Illinois Council on  
Continuing Higher Education  
(ICCHE)  
Chicago  
Holiday Inn City Centre  
<http://www.icche.org/>  
Contact: Dr. Carol Reiseck,  
Concordia University Chicago,  
[carol.reiseck@CUChicago.edu](mailto:carol.reiseck@CUChicago.edu)  
708.209.3262.**

**March 1 - 4, 2007**

*Mentorship, The Dyad, Triad,  
and Beyond*  
**Association for Gerontology  
in Higher Education (AGHE)**

**Portland, Oregon.  
Hilton Portland & Executive  
Tower**

**33rd Annual Meeting and  
Educational Leadership**  
[www.aghe.org](http://www.aghe.org)

**July 24-27, 2007**

*Intergenerational: IT'S  
MONUMENTAL*  
**Generations United  
Washington, DC  
14th International Conference  
Holiday Inn on the Hill  
[www.gu.org](http://www.gu.org)**

## Intergenerational Leadership launched in DeKalb

Lynette Hallauer

Aging is an asset was the theme that set the stage for the DeKalb School District's Intergenerational Leadership Program launch on Monday, Nov. 20. More than 70 people attended the event in the Terrace Room at Hopkins Park. Superintendent Paul Beilfuss spoke about the mission of the schools: "students can reach their full potential while preparing to contribute to our global society." He continued, "The key phrase is global society. Our students are not students of DeKalb, northern Illinois, Illinois, the midwest, or the United States, they are students of the world. Observe third graders visiting Europe via the Internet!"

Superintendent Beilfuss spoke to the retirees present, "We need your help." We're surveying our students using Peter Benson's work from the Search Institute to determine the number of developmental assets our students report they have attained. We know that the more developmental assets a student attains, the less likely the student will participate in "risky" behaviors, such as alcohol and drugs. One of the assets is to develop a relationship with an adult outside the immediate family. For many of us, that means a coach, teacher, counselor, scout leader, minister, or neighbor

that befriends or mentors us in a guiding fashion." We all have friends across generations, and part of our diversity is generational. We learn and benefit from each other, regardless of age, and we learn to appreciate the positive differences among us."

Russ Marineau chairman of Naperville District 203's HURRAH (Happy, Upbeat Retirees [and other] Residents Actively Helping) program and Jane Angelis, director, Center for Intergenerational Leadership, were the main speakers. Angelis and Marineau mentioned a number of ways volunteers serve in other school districts: pen pals, homework assistance after school or during study halls, recording books on tape, and sharing personal recollections of historic events such as World War II, just to name a few. They also stressed that learning can go both ways. As one example, Marineau said Naperville students offer computer training for senior citizen volunteers.

DeKalb's Intergenerational Leadership Program is an outgrowth of the State of Illinois



Launch of Intergenerational Leadership in DeKalb  
L to R: Robin Stearnes, Stearnes Group; Superintendent Paul Beilfuss; Jane Angelis, Center for Intergenerational Leadership, and Russ Marineau, HURRAH, Naperville Dist 203.

Intergenerational Initiative. On November 1, 2005, Senate President Emil Jones, Jr. convened a forum of students and retired faculty in the Illinois Senate chamber to discuss how younger and older generations could work together for education. The event was sponsored by the Intergenerational Initiative at SIU Carbondale and the Illinois Board of Higher Education.

The DeKalb Intergenerational Leadership Program is being coordinated by The Stearnes Group, a Chicago consulting firm headed by DeKalb native Robin Stearnes. Principals at the launch event noted that there are plenty of opportunities available in their buildings.

Lynette Hallauer is communications director for the DeKalb School District.

# My Big Fat Italian, Aging Family?

Megan Frejlich  
Continuance Intern

Someone once told me that no matter how poor a man is, if he has family, he is rich. In my life, I have come to believe that family picks you up when you're down, carries you through difficult times and is there to laugh with you, cry with you and forever cherish the times spent with you.

Maybe I should give you some insight into my family and the aging process we have all been through together. My mom's side of the family is the stereotypical, huge, loud, Italian family. My mom is the youngest of four girls and has a sister who is 20 years older, making me, at age 20, the youngest of all the first cousins. My oldest first cousin is 50 years old. To some people that is insane, but to me, those are the people I call family.

In some families the head of the family is often a man. In my family, the head was Nanie, Caroline Elia, the most well-respected, loved woman you could ever imagine. Every Sunday, she would gather all of us together for a dinner that she had planned and prepared the week before. As everyone got older, especially Nanie, it got harder to get everyone together for that fantastic family meal. She tried her hardest until her death, March 1998, when we put everything else aside to fulfill her wish of remaining a strong-bonded family.

Aging takes a toll on everyone's life, and it took a toll on ours. After Nanie's death our family split four different ways, but always knew that if someone needed help, the whole family was just a phone call away. At first we were all angry at each other and for no apparent reason. It wasn't until recently that our family has realized that aging is a positive process and because there is no way of running away from it, we might as well embrace it.

My mom was born in 1950, making her a baby boomer, as are several of my cousins. Today, some of them have children attending colleges in different regions of Illinois. We could sit around and be upset that everyone is getting older but instead we anticipate the good that comes with aging. For example, we have a few new babies in the family who bring joy and happiness to us every time we see them. We have family members who are experiencing amazing things for the first time ever, Holy Communion, graduation from college and high school and most importantly weddings that bring the whole family together.

Aging is a process that is inevitable. The way you handle it is what sets you apart from the next person. When I was a small child my cousins were the people who raised me when my mom and dad needed a break from my older sister and me. The opportunity to hang out with teen-agers was

the greatest thing in the world. Through their trials and tribulations, they taught me life lessons that far surpassed any book knowledge I would receive in school. As we grew older and they had children of their own, I took pride in watching over their children and teaching them new things as my cousins had done for me.

At age 20, not only have I realized how important family is, but I have gained even greater knowledge about how aging benefits all of us. My life has been affected by every one of my family members from birth through childhood, teen-age years and adulthood until old age. Nanie's death may have affected the family in a way that made us reject the aging process, but if she were here today she would tell us something far more important. Your lives will change with age, friends will come and go, society will throw different obstacles in your way, but staying together as a family will allow you to accomplish anything that is presented to you with the morals we have all instilled in each other. And with that understanding, we are able to accept aging.

Megan Frejlich is a junior Journalism major at Eastern Illinois University. Her home town is Oakbrook.





# The Last Word

## *The Four Pillars of Education*

*The Four Pillars of Education were developed by the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century and provide exceptional guidelines for younger and older generations learning, working, and leading. The pillars were published in "Learning: The Treasure Within."*

**1** **Learning to Know** represents basic education for all which is a passport to lifelong education and literacy. It means mastering the instruments of knowledge so that all can understand their environment to be able to live in dignity, to develop occupational skills, and to communicate.

**2** The second pillar is **Learning to Do**, the competence which comes from applying knowledge in a variety of situations, expected and unexpected. It includes the capacity to work effectively with others and establishes teamwork. This implies the need to learn in a variety of settings, in work and in the community. These two pillars embrace much of what we hold to be a traditional education, but there is more.

**3** The third pillar, **Learning to Live Together**, promotes understanding and harmony. Education must take two complementary paths, on one level, gradual discovery of others and, on another, experiences of shared purposes throughout life, which seems to be an effective way of avoiding or resolving latent conflicts.

**4** Last, **Learning to Be**, is a mixture of idealism and practicality. All human beings must be enabled to develop independent critical thinking and form their own judgement, in order to determine for themselves what they should do in the different circumstances of life. Learning to Be emphasizes again the importance of considering the whole person in education, not only the worker or consumer.

*Education must be a tool for understanding and mastering change. It must also provide the permanence and continuity of history and culture, perhaps more today than ever before.*

*Education is the best tool for communicating to each young person what humanity has learned about itself.*

M. Jacques Delors, Chair  
International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century

